

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY BUJUMBURA

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 041552

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PDIP,BY

SUBJECT: RESTRICTIONS ON DIPLOMATIC TRAVEL

REFS: A) BUJUMBURA 84; (B) STATE 26713; (C) BUJUMBURA 92

1. DEPT SOUNDINGS INDICATE THAT IN MOST PAST SIMILAR SITUATIONS INVOLVING AFRICAN COUNTRIES, EMBASSIES HAVE MADE AT LEAST MINIMUM COMPLIANCE WITH HOST GOVERNMENT RESTRICTIONS CONCERNING BOTH NOTIFICATION AND PERMISSION FOR IN-COUNTRY TRAVEL. IN MOST CASES INITIAL GOVERNMENT FERVOR HAS PETERED OUT WITH PASSING OF TIME. IT IS OUR UNDERSTANDING THAT THIS WAS ALSO THE CASE IN BURUNDI WHERE PRACTICE OF PREVIOUS AMBASSADORS HAS BEEN TO NOTIFY GRB IN ADVANCE OF THEIR TRAVEL INTO THE INTERIOR. IT IS ALSO OUR UNDERSTANDING THAT, IN EFFORT TO DEFRAY ANY GRB SUSPICIONS, EMBASSY CONTINUED TO NOTIFY GRB OF AMBASSADOR'S INTERNAL TRAVEL LONG AFTER GOVERNMENT HAD EASED THE TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS IMPOSED IN 1972. MANY US AMBASSADORS SERVING IN AFRICAN POSTS ROUTINELY NOTIFY HOST GOVERNMENTS OF THEIR INTENTION TO TRAVEL IN THE INTERIOR ALTHOUGH THIS OFTEN DONE ON VOLUNTARY BASIS RATHER THAN AS REQUIRED PROCEDURE.

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2. IN PAST DEPT HAS BEEN RELUCTANT TO CONSIDER IMPOSING RECIPROCAL TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS ON FOREIGN DIPLOMATS IN US. IMPLEMENTATION OF SUCH RESTRICTIONS WOULD BE DIFFICULT AT BEST AND, IN CASE OF BURUNDI, PRACTICAL IMPACT WOULD PROBABLY BE NEGLIGIBLE IN VIEW SMALL EMBASSY STAFF. THEREFORE SUGGEST YOU EXERCISE CAUTION IN SUGGESTING TO GRB THAT CONSEQUENCE OF ITS RESTRICTIONS MIGHT BE RETALIATORY MEASURES IMPOSED BY USG.

3. BELIEVE BEST COURSE OF ACTION AT THIS POINT IS TO AWAIT REACTION TO YOUR FORMAL PROTEST AND, IN MEANTIME, KEEP IN CLOSE TOUCH WITH REST OF DIPLOMATIC CORPS WITH VIEW TO COORDINATING ACTIONS TO EXTENT POSSIBLE. IF YOU CONSIDER USEFUL, DEPT WILL RAISE MATTER WITH BURUNDI AMBASSADOR ON HIS RETURN TO WASHINGTON. KISSINGER

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